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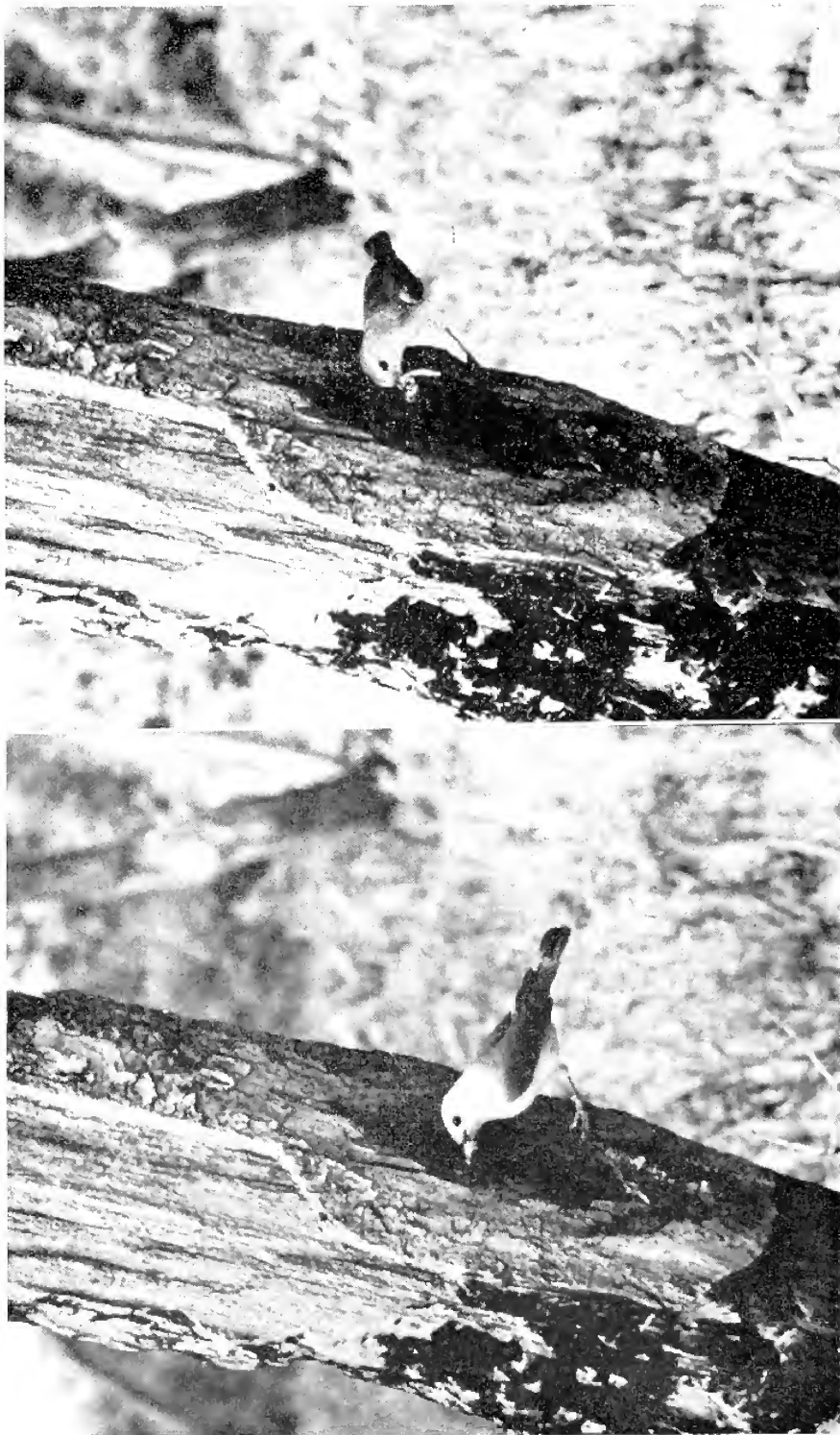
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PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS BRINGING FOOD FOR YOUNG

From color stereos by Tom Kent. Male bird in left picture, female in right. Photographed June 13, 1957.

NOTES ON THE PROTHONOTARY WARBLER IN JOHNSON COUNTY

By FRED W. KENT

7 East Market St.
IOWA CITY, IOWA
and

ROBERT F. VANE

2220 Grande Ave. S.E.
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

(With photographs by Fred W. and Tom Kent)

In a previous article we have mentioned the productiveness of late spring birding. In their June birding the authors have found several species of warblers to be summer residents in their area. The Yellow Warbler and the Yellowthroat are to be found in areas of rather open or low growth; in mature woodland we may expect to find the American Redstart, Ovenbird, Cerulean and Blue-winged Warblers; and in water areas, notably oxbow lakes, we may expect the Prothonotary Warbler. Yet another resident which we occasionally may find in tangled, impenetrable areas is the Yellow-breasted Chat which has been mentioned in an earlier note. This paper will concern itself with the Prothonotary Warbler.

The Prothonotary Warbler has a very special habitat, nesting in the majority of cases over water. To this end it selects abandoned woodpecker



TYPICAL PROTHONOTARY WARBLER NESTING HABITAT



MALE PROTHONOTARY WARBLER LEAVING NESTING CAVITY

Several pictures taken showed the bird with wing down, as if bracing in hole. (June 12, 1957)

holes or openings in old stumps projecting above water line in sloughs, backwaters and oxbow lakes.

In our area we have found them regularly at four locations. First, we have observed them at a backwater pond at the Upper Palisades of the Cedar River near Mt. Vernon (Linn County). Secondly, we have photographed them at their nest in an oxbow lake of the Iowa River near the Dupont bridge. Two other locations for their regular occurrence are other oxbows of the Iowa River 12 and 15 miles respectively south of Iowa City. They have been found each year in these places, sometimes two or three pairs in each area.

The Prothonotaries are first seen in early May, our dates of observation in 1957 being May 5, 17 and 26, June 9, 12, 13, 15, 18 and 22. In 1958 our dates were May 11, 12, 18 and 25, June 20 and 22.

On June 9, 1957, a pair of Prothonotaries was seen entering and leaving an opening in a stump in the oxbow lake near Dupont bridge. Consequently a return trip was made to this area on the afternoon of June 12. An aluminum canoe was brought up from Iowa City, and accompanied by Dr. Peter Laude the authors paddled across the bayou to approach the nesting stub. The canoe was stabilized some 17 feet from the nesting hole which approached the lower limits of the height of Prothonotary nests as reported by Walkinshaw in the Wilson Bulletin of Sept. 1953. Our nest was roughly 3 feet above the water line.

Within the first half hour the parent birds returned seven times to feed the young within the nest. The male bird not only returned more often but also sang beautifully from his perch in a willow at the water's edge. The birds seemed to use quite a regular route in their approach to the nest, coming in from the north to several trees along the edge of the bayou, finally to two places in the willow and then directly from the willow at the edge

of the bayou to the nesting stub. Almost as if to pose for our cameras, the birds stopped at the entrance to their nesting hole both when entering and leaving, often using one wing to support or balance themselves in the elongated nest opening. Food for the young was gathered around the edges of the slough in maples and willows and also in the marsh weeds.

Following the taking of pictures on this day, a canoe trip down the bayou showed another pair of resident Golden Swamp Warblers, truly a magnificent sight.

Other trips were made to this 1957 nest on June 13, 15, 18 and 22. On June 13 a stereo camera was set up within 3 feet of the nest without apparent bother to the birds unless to the female which fed only once to the male's five times. A 25-foot release permitted the canoe to be some distance away.

On June 15, 1957, the adults were still feeding young, and on the 18th and 22nd they were still in the area.

A rather interesting fact to us was that the following year, on June 22, 1958, Prothonotaries again were seen to be using this nesting hole.

The authors' purpose in writing these notes is certainly not as any scientific professional study, but simply as amateur observations of a strikingly beautiful bird. To be so close to the Golden Swamp Warblers was one of the thrills of many years of birding.



IN THE HAUNTS OF PROTHONOTARIES — DR. VANE WITH MOVIE CAMERA
Backwater of Iowa River, about 15 miles northwest of Iowa City.

THE MOURNING DOVE, HUNTER'S TARGET

By EARNEST W. STEFFEN

1000 Maplewood Drive
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

The purpose of this article is to alert all Iowa Ornithologists' Union members and as many others as possible to the "open season on Mourning Doves" situation. I have learned that a long and convincing letter has been written to the National Audubon Society in support of the open season, and I'm sure that others in favor of it are not going to let the matter rest with the slight set-back they experienced at our May meeting at Vinton. They are prepared to wage a major campaign to get their open season.

I am against an open season on the Mourning Dove (1) because I firmly believe in conservation, (2) because I am against waste, and (3) because it represents unsound thinking to consider any small bird a game species and thus subject to an open season.

For some time I have been speculating as to how effective the program of education on conservation has been. Since the Iowa Ornithologists' Union meeting with its discussion on an open season on Mourning Doves, I have thought about the matter still more. As a result of that event and as a result of observations made as we travel about the country, I have arrived at some rather definite conclusions. I have come to believe that at least 75 per cent of the people do not know what we are talking about when we mention conservation, and that at least 20 per cent give only lip service to the idea. It would appear that of the other 5 per cent who understand conservation and its implications only 1 per cent or less do anything about it.

Conservation authorities tell us that conservation is the "wise use of our natural resources." Unfortunately this so-called definition can be interpreted altogether too liberally if one so wishes. Besides, who is it that can qualify as one who has the wisdom to determine what is wise and what is not? I question very much a statement from the letter mentioned, "with the dove established as a game species, its future is more secure than as a non-game species." If the Mourning Dove population could be maintained by hatcheries as can fish, this statement might have validity. I am even concerned with the inclination toward moderation in the wish to begin with a short open season as an experimental measure. This appears merely to be a foot in the opened door. I feel that once we have an open season, we will be stuck with it from then on. Really, this doesn't seem to spell conservation to me.

I have long ago discovered that people find more pleasure in indulging in waste and carelessness than they do in practicing conservation. The mere fact that people like to do certain things does not make them right or wise either. These two demons, waste and carelessness, are responsible for the devastation of our forests by fire. They litter our highways with assorted debris, they fill the garbage cans with usable food, they deplete the fertility of our soil, they reduce the wildlife of the nation, and they cause the serious destruction of our other natural resources. Worst of all, little or nothing can be done about the situation either by education or by enforcement. The point here is that the hunting of Mourning Doves represents waste, and I think that no one should ever sanction waste.

I recall a certain period, longer ago than many of us care to admit, when farmers encouraged the shooting of Mourning Doves. This did not turn out to be a wholesale slaughter, but in just a few short years the Mourning Dove population was so reduced that one scarcely saw a Mourning Dove from one year's end to the other. People were much less prone toward waste in those days than they are now, yet most of the birds shot were never picked

up and used for food. Nowadays what hunter is going to climb a fence or put himself to any inconvenience to recover the small bit of meat that a Mourning Dove represents? Even if the hunter should bring home some of the birds he has shot with the idea of using them for eating purposes, what housewife would not relegate them to the garbage can forthwith?

On the matter of making a game bird of any small species, I feel that this type of thinking is deplorable. No small bird should be selected for an open season, and no permission to kill it should be given unless it can be proved that it is economically harmful or that it is a nuisance. I wonder how much of a sport the killing of Mourning Doves would be. The shooting of so small a bird seems so trivial and so foolish that I can't see how anyone would get any satisfaction from it. Anyway, it seems that there is much more to living than going out and blowing the life out of a few little, inoffensive birds. Are people so hard up for recreation that they just have to do this kind of killing?

The Mourning Dove does not have a history as a game bird in Iowa. The idea stems from the fact that certain other states have made it a game bird. I don't see why we must follow the lead of any other state. The people of other states are not all-wise nor are they infallible. Therefore why select the Mourning Dove? If people must have a smaller bird to shoot, why wouldn't a substitute bird do as well? Grackles, for instance, are entirely too plentiful, are far less economically useful, propagate much more rapidly, and provide just as much meat. Why not have an open season on grackles instead?

I am not ready to admit that the hunting of birds is a sport. Most certainly the hunting of small birds cannot be considered such, except with an unseemly stretch of the imagination. But I am ready to affirm that the mat-



MOURNING DOVE

From a drawing by Earnest W. Steffen

ter of hunting needs a thorough revamping. I know of no consideration ever being given the idea of limiting the type of firearms that may be used on game birds, but it seems that such limitation would be a worthwhile idea. If, as many people think, the shooting of birds is truly a sport and not just a slaughter, these same people should be willing to submit to some sort of limitation. In order to make the hunting of birds a greater sport to them than it is at present, I would suggest the banning of shotguns, especially the heavy gauges and the repeaters.

I truly hope that we may never see an open season on the Mourning Dove. To promote that hope somewhat I have already written to the National Audubon Society, stating my views. It seems that it behooves all Iowa Ornithologists' Union members and others who are against an open season on Mourning Doves to do likewise. Your valid and convincing reasons against it may induce the National Audubon Society not to give its sanction to an open season. The matter must not rest with just a mere going on record as opposed to an open season. There should be some sort of organized effort.

THE BURROWING OWL AS A VANISHING SPECIES

By WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH

3119 East Second St.

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

With the passing of the native prairie in Iowa many prairie dwelling birds have disappeared or are in the process of disappearing from the state. Among these is the quaint Burrowing Owl.

I was familiar with the Burrowing Owl from boyhood residence in South Dakota, but my first Iowa acquaintance with it was on May 5, 1928. That was a memorable day for me, because on that day the late Dr. T. C. Stephens, O. P. Allert, Charles J. Spiker and I went on an all-day collecting trip in the Sioux City area. One of our last stops for the day was a hillside pasture near the Woodbury County Home southeast of Sioux City. There we found a colony of Burrowing Owls that had been reported on numerous times. It was the same colony of owls reported by A. F. Allen in 1914; by T. C. Stephens in 1916; and by C. J. Spiker in 1924 and 1925. These records have been carefully recorded in "A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa," by Philip A. DuMont, 1934.

To round out the records for this area, I can only report that my last record was April 24, 1946. I have visited the area frequently in the last several years (the last time was May 28, 1958), but I have not seen Burrowing Owls since. On the last visit I contacted the farmer living there, as he was cultivating corn. He told me he had never seen any owls there; he had been farming the place for the last ten years.

While returning from a tour of state parks in 1928, Dr. T. C. Stephens and I saw one Burrowing owl in the extreme eastern part of Woodbury County, on September 3, 1928. I have another sight record for Plymouth County, Iowa, of a single owl on May 13, 1934. Another sight record was made on a field trip while counting geese south of Sioux City on March 29, 1936.

The inspiration for this short article came from a visit by Dr. J. H. Ennis of Mount Vernon, Iowa, a few years ago. In going over my meager bird-skin collection, Dr. Ennis was greatly impressed by the fact that I had an Iowa specimen of the Burrowing Owl. He opined that it might be one of the few Iowa specimens in existence. DuMont reported in the above-mentioned publication that he had seen no Iowa specimen with data. So I de-

cided to write this article, to alert the bird students of Iowa to the possible passing of another valuable bird.

A careful check of the literature of Iowa birds brought out the fact that the late Dr. Logan J. Bennett collected a pair of Burrowing Owls near Elk Lake, Clay County, on July 13, 1933. These study skins are now deposited in the collection of the Department of Zoology, Iowa State College, Ames. (See DuMont, *Wilson Bulletin*, Vol. 47, No. 3, page 205.)

It is now apparent that, except for the general area of Lake Okoboji and west to the South Dakota border, the Burrowing Owl has deserted its former breeding area, which went as far east as the Henry Birkeland record from Story County. Bird students should not only report every occurrence of this little owl in Iowa Bird Life, but should also tell farmers to protect them at all times.

While operating a coal-yard and concrete plant in Sioux City, it was my early-morning habit to make an inspection tour of the entire plant area. On April 11, 1934, while following my usual custom, I saw a small owl lying beside the railroad track. It was a Burrowing Owl. I picked it up and noticed it was still limp and had a broken neck. It might have been killed by flying into overhead wires, or perhaps it became blinded by the headlight of a switch engine and struck that object. I made it up into a specimen. Its length was an even 9 inches, a male bird.

The prairie bird life of Iowa is rapidly changing and many fine species are gone from the state. For future generations, who will like to know something of the fauna of Iowa in the early part of the 20th century, we present-day students of bird life should record any and all records of these vanishing birds.

THE BLUE GROSBEAK IN WESTERN IOWA A SUMMARY

By WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH

3119 East Second St.
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

The Blue Grosbeak as a summer resident in western Iowa has become more and more apparent during the last 25 years, but the honor of reporting the first one goes to a very careful observer, the late Dr. F.L.R. Roberts, then of Spirit Lake, Iowa. Dr. Roberts observed a Blue Grosbeak for about 15 minutes at Spirit Lake, Dickinson County, on May 18, 1924.

It was a period of years before the present writer got very far afield in bird study, for college had to be taken care of, and money saved from work had to be accumulated to buy a dependable automobile. This purchase would have been delayed for several years more, if it had not been for the wonderful generosity of a well-known Iowa Ornithologists' Union member, Mrs. H. J. Taylor of Sioux City. Mrs. Taylor was interested in my bird work. When I told her that a good car was my greatest need for extended trips, she very kindly wrote a check for one-half the purchase price. It was an obvious challenge to me and I soon raised the other half. I found the car I wanted in Des Moines and drove it home proudly, having only one blow-out on the trip.

My Blue Grosbeak records began in that year (1932). I had three records that summer and fall in Woodbury and Plymouth counties. In 1934 I collected the first Iowa specimen, on the J. A. Sturtevant farm in Plymouth County. During the next 15 years I had just an occasional record of this bird, mainly because I knew that any time during any summer I could go to the Sturtevant farm and find Blue Grosbeaks. It was not until 1954 that I decided a

complete survey should perhaps be made of the occurrence of this grosbeak in western Iowa.

Subsequent field trips over the western part of Iowa resulted in logging Blue Grosbeaks for Taylor, Page, Fremont, Pottawattamie, Shelby, Harrison, Crawford, Monona, Woodbury, Plymouth, Sioux and Lyon counties. Trips in the tier or two of counties east of the above mentioned ones have not produced any Blue Grosbeak records for me to date, but in view of the Roberts Dickinson County record, it is reasonable to assume there might be an occasional grosbeak to be found in those counties. On a recent trip to Des Moines, Iowa, we saw Blue Grosbeaks in Monona, Crawford and Shelby counties, and at the entrance to Walnut Woods State Park, near Des Moines, we saw a fine, male Blue Grosbeak.

In recent years, Dr. Martin L. Grant of Cedar Falls, Iowa, and J. S. Findley, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, have written to me of their seeing Blue Grosbeaks along the Big Sioux River in Sioux and Lyon counties. When Herbert Krause of Sioux Falls wrote me recently that he had two records of Blue Grosbeaks near Sioux Falls in the summer of 1958, I was ready at once to take a field trip.

Mrs. Youngworth and I made this trip on July 26, 1958, and in doing so we tried to drive well east of the Big Sioux River. In crossing Plymouth County, we found one Blue Grosbeak near Craig. Proceeding into Sioux County, we found one near Ireton and another a few miles west of Rock Valley. I knew the country west of Larchwood, Lyon County, quite well and had high hopes. We had hardly gone more than 2 miles northwest of the town when we saw our first male Blue Grosbeak. We reached the hamlet of Granite and just north of there we saw a fine, male Blue Grosbeak. Soon a female showed up feeding a full-grown, young bird.

The temptation was now great. Here were Blue Grosbeaks in the first instance not more than 2 miles from the Minnesota border and in the second case about 6 miles away. We spent the next six hours doubling back and forth in Rock County, Minnesota, and finally decided to eat lunch beside Devils Gulch near Garretson, South Dakota. We did this and were rewarded by seeing a female Blue Grosbeak with three fully grown young following her. At this place we were about 2 miles from the Minnesota border. We again took to the road and worked the west edge of Rock County on up into Pipestone County as far as Ihlen. A visit to Split Rock State Park rewarded us with a pair of Traill's Flycatchers, but no Blue Grosbeaks. From Ihlen to Hills we drove back and forth over the countryside, wherever we saw a patch of wild plum or other brush, but our search was in vain. We still feel, however, that a more diligent search than we made will put the Blue Grosbeak on the summer resident list of southwestern Minnesota.

The trend with many of the prairie birds in Iowa and Minnesota is just the opposite of the apparent spread of the Blue Grosbeak. The spread of the grosbeak is almost unique. We have a species which 30 years ago was almost unknown to the state, and without even a collected specimen. Today we can report them as not rare in western Iowa.

The Blue Grosbeak is rather a late spring arrival. I have not found them much before May 15 of any year and usually it is the end of May. The peculiar thing about this grosbeak is that it seems to be a late nester. In July, when Orchard Orioles are already moving to the south, Blue Grosbeaks seem to just be getting into the swing of a second nesting. Bird students are missing a good chance of seeing them by not driving the brushy country roads in July and August, for that is the time to find the Blue Grosbeak still in good plumage and fine song. The latest nesting record Mrs. Youngworth and I have was August 21, 1948, with young still being fed in the nest.

Arthur Ford of Merville, Woodbury County, has given me the farthest northeast record in this area—along the West Fork of the Little Sioux River, near Merville. But I am confident that extensive field work would reveal thinly scattered pairs of Blue Grosbeaks in Cherokee, Ida, Buena Vista, O'Brien, Clay and Osceola counties.

WOODLAND NEIGHBORS, THE THRUSHES

By MRS. CARL PROESCHOLDT
LISCOMB, IOWA

The thrushes with their quiet beauty have so endeared themselves to me I never tire of watching them. Knowing this is a family of gifted songsters enhances their charm for me, even though they are so silent when visiting in our yards and woodlands. So it was a joy to have Hermit Thrushes visit in our yard for two and one-half weeks from April 5 to April 23, 1958.

One day, April 23, will stand out in my memory as Hermit Thrush Day. The day dawned cloudy and cold and soon a bone-chilling rain sent us in. But through our windows we could see Hermit Thrushes hopping in and out of the bushes all day. At one time there were four in our garden in plain view, hopping around like miniature Robins. All day we enjoyed their nearness and apparent tameness.

Swainson's Thrushes and the Gray-cheeked spent many May days in the woods and in our yard, usually no more than one or two at a time. But on the afternoon of May 30, Swainson's Thrushes and the little thrushes in name only, Northern Waterthrushes, were everywhere in the woods, especially near the stream.

By May 21 on our daily dawn walk in the woods we considered ourselves fortunate to see one Gray-cheeked Thrush and another Swainson's. As we watched the Swainson's Thrush a train roared along the edge of our woodland, marring the solitude. At the peak of the dissonance my friend shouted excitedly, "Look! He's singing!" And he really was—we could see the throat quivering, but all we heard was the roar of the train. Moments later three Swainson's hopped about on a fallen tree and we heard a wisp of song.

Although we can hear Wood Thrushes at dusk from the edge of deep woods near by, I had supposed we would never hear the migrating thrushes sing, without following them to their northern haunts. So we were delighted, a little farther on our walk, to hear one break into song. It clearly was a Swainson's song—a flute-like, throaty, gurgling song, like a Veery in reverse. Over and over it sang, sometimes even in duet with another. It had an ethereal quality and filled us with an inner excitement that beautiful symphonic music invokes. On and on the singing continued as we stood listening, entranced.

When the singing ended it was time to go home, but still we lingered, not wanting to break the magic spell. Approaching nearer to the now silent thrushes, we saw one after another among the trees, logs and bushes at the edge of the stream. There were a dozen, at least, in that one spot. Surely the night before must have been a big night for thrush migration.

Then again sounded a song of different quality—a Gray-cheeked Thrush this time, thin and nasal, sometimes rising at the end. This song continued for a shorter time and did not have the fine quality of the Swainson's, but it was lovely, nevertheless.

The songs of the Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes are ranked as inferior thrush songs, but they left us walking on air. In high spirits we turned back to breakfast and our work-a-day world, wondering if we had enjoyed something unusual in thrush migration.

GENERAL NOTES

Turkey Vulture Nesting in Henry County.—I had the pleasure of seeing the nest of a Turkey Vulture in the spring of 1958. It was in a hollow tree. The opening was about 7 feet up but the two eggs were at ground level. Apparently the bird had to climb up the inside of the tree to get out as she would not flush when we caught her on the nest even when we touched her. When we returned later she was gone. I visited the nest several times, but I was unable to keep track of it long enough to see the young hatch. The nest site was about 3 miles straight west of the town of Salem, in Henry County, Iowa.—ROY OLLIVIER, Box 223, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Rock Wren near Sioux City.—The last authentic record of the Rock Wren in Sioux City was made nearly 50 years ago by Walter W. Bennett and A. W. Lindsey, in Stone Park on April 1, 1910. The next valid record was made on August 10, 1941, by Jean Laffoon who found three Rock Wrens in a gravel pit near Hornick, Iowa. This was about 30 miles southeast of Sioux City. A new Rock Wren record was made on June 16, 1958, when I found a singing male in Plymouth County 4 miles north of the city limits of Sioux City. This bird was singing from a power pole near an abandoned shale pit when first seen. Later it flew to the pit and entered a crevice in the shale. It then returned to its singing perch. No attempt was made to find the nest, for the spritely singing of this rare wren was enough satisfaction for this observer.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second St., Sioux City, Iowa.

Short-eared Owls at Hayden Prairie.—We had a fine field trip to Hayden Prairie, the state-owned area west of Cresco in Howard County, on June 15, 1958. We made a long list of flowers and found a Bobolink's nest. During this trip we frightened up nine Short-eared Owls, some of which rose far above us. We found no nests although we searched thoroughly. One of the owls stayed directly over us, and as I watched it dropped down sharply with wings bowed down in a curve and primary feathers vibrating rapidly. This lasted just a few seconds then the bird resumed normal flight. I had never seen a Short-ear perform in this fashion and it was very interesting to me. Dr. Martin Grant, my companion, said that this owl has been seen during courtship to clap its wings under its body and give a vocal performance. We heard no sound on this occasion.—RUSSELL HAYS, 825 Franklin St., Waterloo, Iowa.

Mockingbird Nesting in the Iowa City Area.—Audubon Field Notes reports for the past winter indicate a marked northern increase in Mockingbirds, and our records for this area have produced several observations in the last two winters, including two locations of regular residence. In the spring of 1958 we found them along a sandy road in the Iowa River valley west of the city in April and early May; in June they appeared regularly in two places about a half mile apart. On June 15, I watched a bird carrying nesting material into a small, roadside cedar tree and found a nest just started. It was next to the trunk of the tree and about 6 feet high. On June 20 there were two eggs and on the 25th the bird was incubating four eggs. The nest was a broad affair of twigs, roughly assembled, but with a surprisingly deep center of fine grasses. The nest was checked regularly. Three young hatched on July 6 and the one remaining egg disappeared later. Photos were taken on July 11 of feeding, and on July 16 the nest was vacant but one young was found across the road in a bush. It was being fed regularly by one of the parents, and was found again on July 20. From these observations the total nesting period was four weeks, with some of the young in the nest a little less than ten days; this was not as short as the period of five days for one nest reported in Bent's "Life Histories."

At the other area of observation no nest was found. We thought the birds there were a first brood until we saw them feeding a young bird in a bush on July 13—so that made two nesting records in same area.

A moderate amount of singing was heard during this period with a variety of songs, some of which were such good imitations of other bird songs that we could easily have mistaken them had we not been looking at the bird. The call or alarm note, however, was quite distinctive, easily iden-



"... I WATCHED A BIRD CARRYING NESTING MATERIAL INTO A SMALL, ROADSIDE CEDAR TREE AND FOUND A NEST JUST STARTED."



A MOCKINGBIRD NEST NEAR IOWA CITY



MOCKINGBIRD FEEDING YOUNG

tified and heard frequently. When we were near the nest or young the behavior pattern was quite similar but not as aggressive as the thrasher, usually consisting of "fussing" from perches some short distance away.—F. W. KENT, 7 East Market St., Iowa City, Iowa.

Notes on Upland Plover in Woodbury County.—Nearly 30 years have passed since that pleasant day in May, 1929, when Walter W. Bennett, the late Dr. T. C. Stephens and the writer found Upland Plovers on a large area of pasture along the old Lakeport Road, near Sergeant Bluff, Iowa. The pasture has long since been broken up into acreages. Never again will the stirring, resonant call of this fine bird be heard during the breeding season from this area.

Even as a spring migrant, my records for the Upland Plover near Sioux City are very few. I do not give up easily where birds are concerned, and I have kept a sharp lookout for this species of plover. After dozens of spring and summer trips over the Missouri River bottoms southeast of Sioux City, I was finally rewarded by the sight of an Upland Plover north of Luton. The date was June 5, 1957, but the spot was the most unlikely place one would look for plovers. One side was bordered by a deep drainage ditch, the other by an open cornfield with a narrow strip of oats planted between the first cornfield and a second one.

A farmer was cultivating corn in the field where I was watching this plover feed. When he came to the end of the row I was waiting for him. His name was Loren Horsley and I learned that he was much interested in the birds and animals on his farm. He informed me that a pair of plovers were apparently nesting in his oatfield, as they became excited whenever he drove the tractor along the edge of that field. He also stated he had seen these plovers on his farm the previous summer.

The next farm to the west was now my goal as it was there my farmer friend, Dale Teel, lived. He stated that the Upland Plover didn't feed on his farm, as he had never seen them around and he was in the fields every

day. From these observations it would appear that the pair of plovers stayed quite close to the nesting area. Across the road from the oatfield was a long strip of slough grass with shallow water in the center. I found several families of Killdeer there and from that spot my Upland Plover had flown the first day, so it was probably another feeding area.

My next trip to the Luton area was on June 12, and again I saw the plover. During the next few days, however, disaster struck in the form of a cloudburst. The entire area was under several inches to several feet of water. I did not visit the area again until July 5, but by then the oatfield was a shambles from the water, and weeds several feet tall had sprung up. My plover had deserted the area. I spent the entire day walking through the still muddy fields and found only a pair of Blue Grosbeaks and a few Horned Owls to break the monotony of the regular summer bird life.

Since Farmer Horsley reported the Upland Plovers on his farm last year and we found them again this year, although their nesting was destroyed, it is reasonable to assume that at least one pair is trying to re-establish in Woodbury County after many years of absence. Also assuming that more grassland will be available for nesting areas under the soil-bank plan, we are hopeful that we shall again hear the mellow tones of this fine prairie bird coming from far out over the grain fields of the Hornick bottoms.—WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH, 3119 East Second St., Sioux City, Iowa.

Spring Notes from the Iowa City Region.—The following notes were recorded during the spring season of 1958.

On April 24 an American Bittern spent the day in a spirea bush 3 feet from a window at a home in east Iowa City. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen in a slough 15 miles south of the city by Dr. and Mrs. P. P. Laude and F. W. Kent on April 25. Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen at Conesville Marsh on May 1; they possibly nested as a female was seen there July 26. The Yellow-heads were also seen several times at Muskrat Slough. May 11 was our "Big Count" day and we listed 125 species. A Hudsonian Godwit was seen at Conesville Marsh on May 13.

A first-year, male Orchard Oriole was singing on May 16; it was also seen on June 15 and 17. A mature male was seen on July 2. On May 17 the Yellow-breasted Chats were seen south of the city. The area was surveyed several times but no nest could be found. A chat was also seen 15 miles west of Iowa City. The White-eyed Vireo was observed 5 miles south of Iowa City on May 25 and 30 and June 19 and 21, by Tom Morrissey, Dr. J. H. Ennis, Dr. P. P. Laude and F. W. Kent. Observations on Bell's Vireo were made from May 25 to June 20. One nest with three young was watched. The bird was seen in five other areas in the county, and one other family with young was seen. The singing of this bird was heard until July 26.—F. W. KENT, 7 East Market St., Iowa City, Iowa.

Do Birds Play?—Occasionally I have read of birds seeming to play and I have been anxious to see for myself some examples of it. Not until recently have I ever seen anything I could honestly classify as play, and only play.

With the temperature hovering just above zero on February 11, 1957, I was driving along a country road when I sighted a hawk, a buteo, but otherwise unidentified because of the distance. It was nearly half a mile away, flying laboriously into a strong northwest wind, apparently fighting to make some headway, only to be blown backward. This was repeated, so I stopped

the car and stepped outside to watch the performance more closely with binoculars.

Again and again the hawk fought its way into the wind, only to veer to the left, then turn at right angles and be blown back in a wide, curving arc, almost a half-circle, returning to the approximate spot from where it had started. Over and over the same pattern—fly, turn, then glide; fly, turn, then glide.

Farther away at the very edge of my vision I could see another *buteo* buffeted by the wind, only to turn and glide in the same manner as the first. To me it seemed it could be nothing else but hawks playing, enjoying to the fullest the wild, blustery day.—MRS. CARL PROESCHOLDT, Liscomb, Iowa.

Notes from Cedar Rapids.—Through the years, Cedar Lake and the Cedar River in this city have been the site of some interesting and unusual bird observations. The past winter and spring proved to be no exception as a pair of Hutchins's Geese spent over five months here. I first observed them November 23, 1957, but Dr. Alfred Meyer had seen them a week earlier. Frequently the geese were with Mallards on the lake so the comparison in size left no doubt as to their identification. Generally they stayed on the lake but occasionally were seen on the river in town. The length of their stay enabled other Bird Club members to see these birds. From April 1 to 19, 1958, a Lesser Canada Goose joined the Hutchins's and the three spent much of that time on a point of land extending into the lake, next to a much-traveled street. My last views of the Hutchins's Geese were on April 24 and 28.

I saw a Bonaparte's Gull on the lake June 23, and on February 23, one of the most striking observations I have ever made in this area was that of four male Oldsquaw Ducks in winter plumage on the Cedar River, just three blocks from my home.—LILLIAN SERBOUSEK, 1226 Second St. S. W., Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Notes from Wanata State Forest Reserve.—At regular intervals we try to visit some of the state parks and reserves in Iowa. On June 7, 1958, we made one of these trips to Wanata State Forest, which is adjacent to the city limits of Peterson, Iowa. At this point the Little Sioux River flows about east to west. Since the south bank is the State Forest, this north facing timbered slope is a fine place for summer birds. Several good springs flow from the deep ravines. This source of good water entices numerous white-tailed deer as well as song birds to the area.

Probably the most interesting summer birds are the Ovenbirds. We flushed two from their nests and decided that four or five pairs nested in the area. The Red-bellied Woodpecker is another common bird in the reserve. We watched at least five different pairs. Several pairs of Wood Thrushes summer there. We watched one female crouched down on her nest for several minutes; finally the suspense was too great and she took off with loud, liquid "quirts." The Red-eyed Vireo is the common vireo of these heavy woods, but we did find one Yellow-throated Vireo. The Wood Pewee is common and we saw several Scarlet Tanagers. An interesting find was made at the edge of the timber when we flushed a Black-billed Cuckoo from her nest, which contained one egg. In the meadows near Peterson and Linn Grove an occasional Bobolink is still found, but they are by no means common any more.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second St., Sioux City, Iowa.

Late Spring Records for Northwest Iowa.—On June 5, 1958, Edwin O. Willis and I visited several localities in Dickinson and Emmet counties and obtained some interesting records.

Our first stop was at Okamanpedan State Park in Emmet County where we found one Swainson's Thrush.

We next visited Fort Defiance State Park and were joined by Myrle Jones and Dean Roosa. In the afternoon all four of us visited the Hottes Lake area west of Spirit Lake in Dickinson County. On a rock-covered sandbar we found a Ruddy Turnstone and observed it both on the ground and in flight. This is a rather late record for this rare migrant, and a flock of 31 White Pelicans was also late. In wooded areas bordering the lake we found Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Scarlet Tanager.

A late flight of Olive-sided Flycatchers was still in progress, and we found three of these birds in Emmet County and two in Dickinson County. The following day Ed and I found three more near the Iowa line in Martin County, Minnesota. We had observed this flycatcher in Hamilton County, Iowa, on June 3.

Waterfowl seemed to be unusually numerous in regard to both number of individuals and number of species present. Mallards and Blue-winged Teal were well distributed, and we saw a brood of eight Mallards in the Ingham Lake area of Emmet County. We also saw the following species in Dickinson and Emmet counties: Pintail, American Widgeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck.—DENNIS L. CARTER, 408 South Prairie Ave., Fairmont, Minnesota.



SCREECH OWL

From a drawing by Earnest W. Steffen
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

OF MEN AND MARSHES, by Paul L. Errington (Macmillan Co., New York, 1957; cloth, 8vo size, pp. i-ix+1-150, with 22 drawings; price \$4.50).

"I have seen and lived among the plains and mountains of the West and the coniferous forests and open lakes of the North, and I know some of the great scenic areas of our continent. These I love, too, yet for me, as an individual, no other natural feature has ever had the enduring attraction of an undespoiled chain of marshes in an undespoiled setting of glacial hills." Thus Dr. Paul L. Errington describes in his preface "Of Men and Marshes" the inspiration of his message.

His words reflect my own sentiments. As one also privileged to roam the prairie marshes of eastern South Dakota as a boy, visit the tundra marshes of the Arctic, and later study and enjoy the few remaining marshlands of Iowa, the nostalgic loss of what is good and beautiful also haunts and torments me. Dr. Errington presents a challenge to all thinking men, not to destroy their heritage of marshes, but to enjoy and perpetuate these natural values. His didactic work should be read and studied by all who love the out-of-doors, not only for personal enjoyment and betterment, but to aid them in the crusade to save our wetlands.

With sparkling clarity and scholarly accuracy, the wonders of marshes are shared with his fellow men. Their glacial origin is described in perfect prose with reverence for past, present and future status. Of marshes and Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, Dr. Errington paints a chronological epic based upon personal experience and thorough study. His style brings to life the many living creatures and explains their relationship to their domain. Ducks and geese become living, flying, honking entities. Shore-birds run across mud flats, muskrats struggle with changing environment, while insects and fishes dwell among the shallows. Horned and Barred Owls hoot from woods bordering marshes, and minks drag booty to their retreats. Loons, big white or gray Herring Gulls, flocks of pelicans or cormorants, or herons, grebes, coots, rails, terns, swallows, blackbirds or an Osprey in the air—each has its place.

The text is complemented by 22 excellent black and white drawings by H. Albert Hochbaum. As Director of the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, the artist captivates and interprets the spirit and message of the marsh.

Marshlands of the deep South, of desert regions, of Canadian prairies and forests, all and more are described and compared with a warm and human touch. "Goodfellow island" becomes a symbol of all marsh islands in the reality of past events, and in the light of future needs. No one can forget the huge skunk ambling over the hills in the December moonlight as both predator and prey concluded their age-old game. In the defense of naturalness, Errington concludes: "To me, the fact of being is justification for natural beauties. One who loves the out-of-doors should not necessarily have to visit islands or peninsulas in person to enjoy the thought of their existence. These islands and peninsulas are a delight to me in that they may maintain so much of their wilderness integrity, in that they may be so much a part of naturalness where naturalness belongs."

The requisites of safety and comfort in a marsh are thoroughly treated both from the common-sense and scientific standpoint. As the great cartoons of his fellow-Iowan, J. N. ("Ding") Darling, prodded the public conscience on land abuses—Errington states: "It is time for a reversal in the drainage trend. As members of a presumably rational and enlightened society, do we need to let the destruction of our wetland values continue as long as someone feels able to personally profit thereby?" This passage too,

should echo in receptive minds: "Greater familiarity with marshes on the part of more people could give man a truer and a more wholesome view of himself in relation to Nature. In marshes, life's undercurrents and unknowns and evolutionary changes are exemplified with a high degree of independence from human dominance as long as the marshes remain in marshy condition. Marshes comprise their own form of wilderness. They have their own life-rich genuineness and reflect forces that are much older, much more permanent, and much mightier than man."

Dr. Paul Errington, scientist, naturalist, and humanist, has created an inspiring book conveying a forceful message to all thinking people who value good things. Everyone will enjoy and profit from reading this book, and I heartily recommend it to every man, woman, and child who loves the out-of-doors and especially to those who have never had the opportunity to understand marshes or men.—JAMES G. SIEH.

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THE BIRDS OF THE ANDOVER REGION, by Oscar M. Root (published privately, 1958; paper wrappers, pp. 1-38, with 2 photographs, 1 map; price \$1.00).

Although it concerns a region in Massachusetts, this booklet has a particular interest for us Iowans because the author, one of our members, has roots in Ottumwa and spends occasional summers back in Iowa. He is an experienced ornithologist who approaches any problem with a seriousness and intentness of purpose that is characteristic.

The Andover list is a very thoroughly worked-up paper, which has been reprinted in booklet form from three issues of the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Audubon Society in which it originally appeared. Mr. Root's studies were conducted over a period 16 years, 1942-1957, in an area that covers approximately 72 square miles and has quite varied geographical features, with a dense human population. The avi-fauna of this region is, of course, very interesting and he has compiled a long list of migrant and resident birds.

The introductory portion of the paper describes the physical aspects of the region, gives the history of bird work there, information on May and Christmas counts, breeding-bird censuses, and a little about the vagaries of of the weather. The annotated list of species contains much documentary material—occurrence and migration dates, nesting records. It is an important regional list, a model of thoroughness and detail. Those who contemplate similar lists should study the style of this one. Copies may be obtained from Mr. Root, by writing to him in care of Brooks School, North Andover, Mass., price \$1.00.—F. J. P.

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BIRDS OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA, by Merrill Wood (Pennsylvania State Univ., College of Agri. Exper. Station, University Park, Pa., 1958; Bull. 632; paper wrappers, pp. 1-46, with 2 colored plates, 1 map).

This is another regional bird paper that we wish to call to the attention of our readers. The data accompanying the annotated list of birds came mostly from an area within a radius of 15 miles around University Park, but a larger circle within 50 miles is also included in a more general way. The booklet contains a great deal of useful information leading to a better understanding of the bird life of the state, and certainly will be welcomed by those living near by. The two colored plates are very attractive and have been used in other publications on birds. They depict 45 common species and were painted by Jacob Bates Abbott. Issued as a State University bulletin, it should attain a wide circulation and thus have an excellent educational influence.—F. J. P.

The American Association of School Administrators (1201 Sixteenth St. N. W., Washington, D. C.) has announced that copies of its 29th Yearbook (1951), entitled "Conservation Education in American Schools," is now available at the reduced price of \$3.00 a copy, or \$1.50 a copy in quantities of 10 or more. The Association has produced only one yearbook on conservation, this 1951 issue. It is a cloth-bound book of 527 pages, illustrated, covering the various phases of conservation education, with very useful guides to constructive programs and reference materials. It won an award from the National Association of Conservation Education and Publicity. Lists of organizations and the roster of members of the Association take up 200 pages of the book.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Mrs. W. C. DeLong, a Shenandoah member, spent the summer at Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, where her son, Dick, was a park naturalist for the summer season. Both she and her son had permits to band birds in the park, and they put on demonstrations for the bird hikers on Sunday mornings. She wrote that she had time to locate many interesting nests of birds. Among the birds they banded were: Clark's Nutcrackers, Gray-headed Juncos, Song Sparrows, Audubon's Warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Tanagers, Robins, Western Wrens, and Green-tailed Towhees.

Dr. and Mrs. Paul L. Errington left New York City on September 18 on the Gripsholm, bound for Gothenburg, Sweden. Dr. Errington has a year's leave of absence from Iowa State College at Ames. He expects to headquarter at the University of Lund for the equivalent of the first semester and, in the spring, be at either or both the University of Uppsala or Stockholm's Northern Museum. From time to time, he expects to make trips away from headquarters, to Norway and Denmark and including a fall trip into Swedish Lapland. In early summer the Erringtons plan to spend a month or six weeks in West Germany and Britain. The Doctor's work will be in the field of population dynamics with special reference to cyclic phenomena and predation, and special studies on the North American mink, which has recently become established in Scandinavia; also studies of northern European waterfowl. In addition to visiting and research, he will serve as a consultant and lecturer at various institutions. He was awarded a Gugenheim Fellowship and received grants from the National Science Foundation and the Swedish government.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

will be taken as usual between December 20 and January 5. Please follow the form of previously published censuses as closely as possible, with birds given in A. O. U. Check-list order, and full data on numbers seen, hours, weather and ground conditions. Censuses of at least five hours or longer are preferred. Send your report to the Census Editor, Woodward H. Brown, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines 12, Iowa, not later than January 20, 1959.

A report blank has been prepared for the use of those reporting to Iowa Bird Life. The results of the censuses thus shown in the respective areas will make the reporters' job much easier. These blanks will be sent well in advance of the census period to those who turned in reports last year. If you expect to be a reporter for your area and do not receive a blank, please write the Editor for one. The blank does not call for party-hours or party-miles, but if the results are to be published the greater part of the day should be spent in the field and a reasonable amount of time afoot.